

the claims. The Examiner finds the “receiving” and “obtaining” steps of claim 1 in Knight at column 11, and then points to the “optional linking feature” mentioned once in Knight, at column 18. The Examiner then applies the teachings of Harvey to find the “transmitting” step.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection, because the combination of references does not teach or suggest the invention. Applicant’s claim 1 requires transmitting to a user an invitation to join a target list of customers related to a search criterion submitted by the user. Knight and Harvey lack any such disclosure.

Knight discloses an elaborate searchable message board. The “optional linking feature” disclosed in column 18 of Knight involves clicking a link in a pop-up window to retrieve more information related to the link. Therefore, Knight discloses nothing about inviting a user to join a target list related to a search criterion. Nor does Knight have anything to do with seeking names of potential “customers.”

Harvey does not supply the missing elements. Harvey discloses technology for building an online community. While in a very broad sense Harvey discloses a “creator” generating a “target list” of potential members of the community, Harvey does not disclose the “target list” as claimed (and certainly not of potential customers). In Harvey, the application simply accesses the “creator’s” locally or centrally stored communication address book (e.g., email address book). Then, the “creator selects the names and e-mail addresses of the individuals to be invited to the community.” 4:47-64. Thus, Harvey teaches selecting individuals from pre-existing address books. This technique has nothing

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to do with the Applicants' technique of transmitting invitations to users based on the content of a search criterion the user had entered.

Since the asserted prior art does not teach or suggest claim 1, it does not teach or suggest dependent claims 2-5 either.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections and early allowance.

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's attention to this matter.

Respectfully submitted,



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